

KANSAS

Kansas State Historical Society
Cultural Resources Division

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

CERTIFICATION OF STATE REGISTER LISTING

The Register of Historic Kansas Places includes all Kansas properties nominated to the National Register as well as lower threshold properties which are listed on the state register only.

Property Name: Scholer House

Address: 701 Pine Street, Wamego, KS 66547

Legal: Lots 648 & 649, Wamego Original Townsite

County: Pottawatomie

Owner: Ralph W. and Carol D. Howard

Address: 701 Pine Street, Wamego, KS 66547

National Register eligible _____

State Register eligible X

This property was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on February 21, 2004.

I hereby certify that this property is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Richard D. Panikratz
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

2/25/04
Date

9/95

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The current foundation of rubble concrete forms a square two-room nine-foot deep basement under approximately 75% of the house. Simulated-stone concrete blocks form the above ground foundation and crawl spaces. The secondary back porch added in the early 1960s has a poured concrete foundation. The basement dates from the original house on this site (built ca. 1880) which was moved off the site when Carl Scholer bought the property in 1908. In 1995, at the recommendation of a structural engineer, a support beam made of three bolted together side-by-side pieces of 2 x 12 pine lumber was placed in the north half of the basement under the ground floor extending from the front foundation to rear foundation walls. In addition, three concrete footings, two-feet deep, were placed in the basement floor supporting the beam with columns made of three pieces of bolted together 2 x 6 pine lumber each.

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Currently the bay window is a restored stained glass window (ca. 1911) topped by three small rectangular beveled glass lights. This window, installed in 1999, replaced a plate glass window which was not original. A historical photograph shows a cottage window just like that facing Pine Street, narrow upper sash of leaded glass with intersecting comes and large lower sash. Westward from the bay window is a large one-over-one double hung window added in August 2003. This window replaced a pair of smaller casement windows installed in 1978. That pair of casement windows replaced a single narrower and taller one-over-one double hung window shown in a historical photograph. A matching narrow tall one-over-one double hung window was originally west of the one replaced, but it was removed and the wall filled in during a kitchen remodeling done in 1978. The south half story has the pent roof at its bottom, boxed cornice, and one large cottage double hung window. This window has a narrow upper sash and a larger lower sash with the same proportions as the east facing gable window.

West Facade:

The west first story facade has one visible window of the original house. Currently this window is a one-over-one double hung window (August 2003) nearly the same size, as determined by noting the siding alterations, as the original window in this location shown in a historical photograph. However, the current window replaced a casement window added in the 1978 kitchen remodeling. The remaining two thirds of the west first story facade is an enclosed dropped roof porch added in the 1960s. It has double pane casement windows (1996) facing south and north and two double pane paired casement windows (1996) facing west. The porch has a steel insulated door with an etched glass window similar in design to that in the original wooden back door which is in its original location between the kitchen and what was the original inset back porch. A historical photograph from 1944 shows that before this larger dropped roof porch was added, the inset porch was enclosed with low walls and large windows above the walls and a window above the door. Most of the outer wall, window and door areas of the original porch were removed when the secondary porch was added. The north end of the dropped roof porch forms a continuation of the north facade of the house.

The west half story facade repeats the three windows of the east side with the exception that the large window is a one-over-one double hung with equal size sashes. The sash in this window is

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The current main roof is asbestos and portland cement shingles, locally called 'slate,' set in a diamond-shaped pattern. This roof probably dates from the early 1920s as similar roofing occurs on buildings built around that time like the Wamego First Methodist Church. A very early historic photograph of the house shows this main roof was originally cedar shingles. Currently the pent roofs are of composite shingles (2003) which replaced a worn layer of composite shingles. The 2003 roofing of the pent roofs removed the older composite shingles, revealing cedar shingles (original) underneath. One chimney pierces the roof just north of the front gable ridge near the intersection of the two gables. This is a brick chimney. A galvanized steel chimney cap was added in 1997.

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Interior Features:

Basement:

In addition to the outside cellar doors previously mentioned, the basement can be reached by interior stairs at the east end positioned under the stairway going to the half story. The basement dates from the first house built on these lots and is 28 feet square. Carl Scholer added eight feet at both east and west by additional foundations with crawl spaces. The nine-foot deep basement is bisected on the east-west direction by a supporting wall leaving thirteen and one half foot spans for the floor joists on either side of the wall. This support system was enhanced by the additional foundation support added in 1995 and previously described with the foundation in Section 7, Exterior Features. An additional small area on the north side is partitioned by six-foot high wooden walls to provide a coal storage area. The floor is concrete throughout. The south room of the basement received a wooden deck type floor over the original concrete in 2001 to provide a level floor for the current owners woodworking shop. There is no floor drain. There are two above ground single sash windows on the south side and two single sash windows plus a now closed up coal chute on the north side. The north side also has stairs up to the cellar doors.

First Floor:

The first story front door located at the southern corner of the inset porch, opens into a small foyer. Stairs to the half story rise to the north and a door in direct line with the entrance door leads into a large room now used as a formal living room, but originally used as the family formal dining room. This large room contains the bay window and window seat, the interior access door to the basement and two additional doors, one to the dining/kitchen area and the other into the library on the northeast corner of the house. Another now closed up door (1975) opened into the larger downstairs bedroom on the north side of the house. The current library, occupying the northeast corner of the house, once had a door onto the front porch, closed in 1975, and was used as the first floor parlor. This room has the large cottage window with the leaded glass upper sash, previously described, as well as two other windows, one being located where the former outside door was. Both the current living room and library have quartersawn heart pine three-inch wide flooring with each board spanning the entire east-west dimension of the room. When carpeting was removed from these floors in 1999, the current living room had an overlay of hard brown formaldehyde phenolic resin tile (similar to Bakelite). This tile was entirely removed and the floors refinished.

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The current back porch encompasses the original inset back porch and the porch added in the early 1960s. An original closet is located on the north wall of the original inset porch. The added-on porch has a concrete floor overlaid with vinyl asbestos tile. This spacious well-lit area has the washer and dryer as well as a deep utility sink, freezer and space for over wintering potted plants.

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The first floor rooms with the exception of the dining/kitchen had sheet paneling installed over the lath and plaster walls and ceilings lowered from nine to eight feet by dropped ceilings in remodeling efforts of the 1970s. During this effort all original wood trim, including baseboards, door and window trim, were removed with the exception of the windows in the room currently used as a library. The original balustrade to the half story was also removed along with the door and window trim in the foyer. Most of this paneling and dropped ceilings have been removed (1997-2001) by the current owners. Gypsum board was used on walls and ceilings to cover damage done to the lath and plaster.

Most of the first floor woodwork has been replaced in the restoration efforts begun in 1995 with woodwork in keeping with the original woodwork that still exists in the half story rooms. Corner blocks were used with the baseboards in this restoration. Outlines of similar corner blocks were found on the plaster when the 1970s paneling was removed from the current library, living room and large first floor bedroom. Currently the first floor bathroom and the small office/pass-through room have the 1970s dropped ceilings and paneling. Plans are underway to return these rooms to their original ceiling height with wood trim of the doors, windows and baseboards in keeping with the original.

Half Story:

The interior of the half story encompasses three bedrooms and a central parlor, all with eight foot ceiling heights throughout. There are no sloping ceiling areas often found under gabled roofs in the living space. All sloping ceiling areas are in walk-in closets (one is now a full bathroom) in the four corners of the half story. Also, no space is used as hallway. The steps coming up from the foyer have one landing before opening into the large central parlor on the parlor's eastern wall. From this point moving clockwise around this room are a door into the closet of the southeast corner, the large window on the south wall, a door into the current half story full bathroom (originally a closet containing a half bath) on the west wall, a door into the west bedroom also on the west wall, a door into the north bedroom on the north wall, and a door into the east bedroom on the east wall adjacent to the door at the stairs. This parlor is a spacious 11.5'x15' room. No paneling was ever applied to these walls. This room retains the original lath and plaster walls and ceiling and is the only room that retains all its original wood work. The floor is currently carpeted, as is all the half story except the bathroom. The original quartersawn pine floors can be seen in the three closets.

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From this parlor each of the three bedrooms can be accessed. Each bedroom has a large window. Part of the south wall of the west bedroom was moved to the north to enlarge the southwest closet for a full bath (1995). The west bedroom originally had a door directly into this closet which also had a door, previously mentioned opening into the parlor. The west bedroom also has the only access into the closet of the northwest corner. The west bedroom was paneled in the 1970s, but the original wood trim was retained around the window and doors. The north bedroom has access to the closet of the northeast corner. The original wood trim remains around the doors of this room. The east bedroom has a complex shape due to the stairwell. It also has a door into the northeast closet. This east bedroom retains the original wood trim around doors and windows.

The entire half story is full of light and has easy access to ventilation. Each of the closets has a small window to provide light and ventilation. The four large windows of the bedrooms are paired across from each other on east-west and north-south orientations. In the days before air conditioning, this provided the best ventilation possible as well as good daytime lighting.

The brick chimney which serves as a flue for the basement furnace passes through the south end of the first floor bedroom closet and the northeast closet in the half story. This placement hides the chimney and prevents its intrusion into living space as it passes through the house. Near this chimney in the northeast closet ceiling is a small removable access panel to the attic.

The southwest closet is now a full bath. Originally it had a toilet and wash basin. The new toilet is in the position of the original so the chase would not have to be altered. Full head room is limited by the slope of the gable, but the area around the toilet, the vanity with wash basin, and the tub shower have more than adequate height.

Outbuildings:

A detached garage is located west of the house. A short driveway parallel to the alley leads to the garage. The garage is basically a pole barn with vinyl siding (2003) over wood vertical siding. The floor is poured concrete, but has numerous cracks. The gable roof is composite shingles (2003). This garage was built by Alvin Knecht, son-in-law of Carl Scholer, while Alvin and his wife, Ella Scholer Knecht, lived in the house. The garage replaced an old barn that stood in the same location. The barn was on the property when Carl Scholer bought the double lot in 1908. This barn was associated with the first house on the property which was moved off before construction of the Carl Scholer House.

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Near the fish pond in the northwest corner of the yard is a small shed. The shed is finished to match the garage in vinyl siding (1997). It has a composite shingled gable roof. The door and the one window face east. The foundation is a six inch thick concrete slab. The granddaughter of the builder said this was a chicken coop when built originally by Carl Scholer. The vinyl siding replaced wide asbestos siding. When the re-siding was done in 1997, one board of the rear wall showed the half moon cut out typical of outhouses. Thus some of the boards used in the original construction were salvage. The shed is a non-contributing structure.

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The Carl Madsen Scholer House, built in 1909, on Lots 648 and 649 of the Wamego Original Townsite, Wamego, Kansas, is nominated for the Register of Historic Kansas Places as an example of late nineteenth to early twentieth century, middle class residential architecture. Home construction flourished between 1890 and 1930 as the emerging definition of "American" came to include the ideal of home ownership for the middle classes. The Scholer House shows a consciousness of economy while retaining some ornamental stylistic tags, and an interior organization that reflects the idea of a home being a haven for the family rather than a social statement.

Structurally, the Scholer House is a simple rectangular plan of one-and-one-half stories under a cross-gabled roof and is symmetrical either bisected north to south or east to west. The design of the Scholer House follows trends seen in the early twentieth century urban middle class residences: a substantial and solid facade, a small entry vestibule providing access to the upper story, an interior that is roomy, a half story providing both living space and ample storage space. The quality of workmanship in the building of the Scholer House has helped preserve a high degree of architectural integrity both inside and outside. Carl Scholer himself exemplifies two types of post-Victorian builders: the non-architect/near architect and the owner/occupant.

The exterior of the Scholer House is simple, but includes stylistic tags such as the builder's selection of Queen Anne influences in (1) the steeply pitched cross gabled roof, (2) the use of shingles for texture on the gable cladding in contrast to the smoother texture of clapboard siding on the first story, (3) the pent roofs under the north and south gables, (4) the cornice returns and frieze boards on the east and west sides, (5) the two-thirds operable cottage windows with leaded glass upper third, and (6) the offset, inset porch with a pair of Doric influenced columns. The physical use and social function of the house type is clearly evident: the exterior is residential and unpretentious. The house appears nestled under the cross gables and situated on the double lot to convey a feeling of openness in the landscape on all four sides of the house.

The formal entry hall and formal parlor of many Victorian homes is missing, replaced by maximized living and storage space. The design of the Scholer House provided comfortably for the builder's anticipation of it being a multi-generational residence. The stairs off the vestibule give access to the half story without entering the first floor rooms. The interior floor plan provides 2774 sq. ft. of useable living space (1073 sq. ft. ground floor, 1061 sq. ft. half story, 640 sq. ft. basement) in a modest structure (44' x 28'). Under the steeply pitched symmetrical cross-gabled roof are four half story rooms with eight foot ceilings and four walk-in closets approximately fifteen feet long with three feet of full head room plus an

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additional four to five feet of width under the roof slope. One closet contained a half-bath, now a full bath. The downstairs had a living room, a large formal dining room, an open kitchen with family dining area (not to become common until the later Prairie style), two bedrooms, a full bathroom, and two inset porches. Subsequent remodeling has removed one first floor bedroom and moved the bathroom (see Section 7). No space is lost to hallways in this economical design.

In its structure the Scholer House exhibits the craftsmanship of an experienced carpenter/builder. The house has survived almost 100 years with only minor structural repairs. The lumber used for construction was old growth pine except for the cladding of cedar siding and shingles. The original interior six-inch wide door and window casing is also old growth pine. Plinth blocks are ten inches tall. Original baseboards are eight inches tall. The flooring consists of three-inch wide pine boards that each span the entire room. The floors are still virtually level throughout. The extra supports in the basement (see Section 7) added by the current owners were preventative rather than palliative. Where exposed the original plaster on lathe walls and ceilings are in good shape requiring little repair. Where the original walls were subsequently covered with paneling by previous owners, damage was done by panel nails and adhesive and these have been covered with quarter inch gypsum board. The foundation is still in excellent condition and did not suffer any failure during the extremely wet summer of 1993.

Carl Scholer typifies two types of builders: the non-architect/near architect and the owner/occupant. In 1868, at the age of twenty-three, Scholer immigrated to the United States from Denmark. He lived approximately a year in Chicago. By 1870, census data shows that he was working as a carpenter in Lawrence, Kansas. Undoubtedly, he acquired carpentry skills in Denmark where it was not unusual for a boy as young as fourteen to begin learning a trade. Carl also received a good education from his father who was a teacher. Within a few years Carl was farming 160 acres in Pottawatomie County.

At age 48 he married a woman twenty years his junior. At age 63, he constructed the Scholer House in Wamego, Kansas, as a residence for himself, his wife, and their only child, Ella. At this time Wamego was a thriving population center in a largely agricultural setting with some 1700 people. The town had amenities such as a municipal water system, electricity, a hospital, and schools. The family's farm house northwest of Wamego did not have running water or electricity and was some distance from school or church. Carl Scholer joined the move from country to town that many Americans were then making. Carl Scholer's training and experience in the building trade was typical of many early twentieth century builders. Some architects were specializing in pattern book houses, but few middle class houses were actually designed by an architect specifically for a client. Scholer is also typical of the owner/occupant